



**Maryland Department of Transportation  
State Highway Administration**

July 19, 1999

Parris N. Glendening  
Governor  
John D. Porcari  
Secretary  
Parker F. Williams  
Administrator

Ms. Magalie Roman Salas  
Commission Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, S.W.  
Suite TW-A325  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: File # NSD-L-99-24, CC docket # 92-105  
United State Department of Transportation's Petition for N11 Allocation

Dear Ms. Salas:

On February 25, 1999, The United States Department of Transportation (US DOT), through the Honorable Rodney E. Slater - the United States Secretary of Transportation, submitted a petition to the FCC requesting the assignment of an abbreviated dialing code (N11) for the purpose of accessing Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) services nationwide. The petition was submitted on behalf of the US DOT, and all the state, regional and municipal transportation authorities responsible for providing transportation services and information to the traveling public.

Through this letter, the Maryland State Highway Administration (MSHA), on behalf the office of the State Governor and all the transportation authorities in the state (municipal, regional and state) expresses its concurrence with and support of the US DOT's petition. Providing a nationwide three-digit telephone access code to the transportation authorities will greatly enhance their ability to provide Advanced Traveler Information Services (ATIS) to the traveling public.

The Maryland State Highway Administration's ITS program, widely known as CHART, is a leader in ITS applications. CHART serves travelers throughout the state of Maryland, and a lot of its deployments and services are concentrated in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan region - the second most congested region in the nation. CHART also works closely with all the other ITS programs in the state and the entire Washington, D.C. region (including the Virginia Department of Transportation's ITS Program and the Washington, D.C. Department of Public Works). CHART, along with all the other ITS programs in the region is doing its best to reduce congestion in the region by providing

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My telephone number is \_\_\_\_\_

Maryland Relay Service for Impaired Hearing or Speech  
1-800-735-2258 Statewide Toll Free

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 717 • Baltimore, MD 21203-0717  
Street Address: 707 North Calvert Street • Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Ms. Magalie Raman Salas  
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traveler information to the traveling public and also by promoting interoperability among all the ITS programs in the region. The requested nationwide three-digit telephone access code will greatly enhance the interoperability of systems among the ITS programs in this highly congested region, as well as facilitate the dissemination of traveler information to both the inter-city and inter-regional travelers in the region.


The Maryland State Highway Administration, along with the Maryland State Governor's Office, and all the transportation authorities in the state strongly believe that the implementation of the requested abbreviated dialing code will benefit the traveling public and the state by:

- improving mobility.
- reducing traffic congestion and air pollution.
- improving economic productivity.
- improving traveler safety
- improving the efficiency of existing transportation infrastructure and
- allowing for a faster emergency response from public agencies.

For additional MSHA's comments on the issue, please see the attached letter from our Office of Traffic and safety's director to the Institute of Transportation Engineers.

Thank you for your cooperation and please contact me at (410) 545-0360 or Mr. Michael Zezeski (CHART Program Manager) at (410) 787-5859 if you have any questions or need further assistance with this matter.

Sincerely,



Douglas R. Rose  
Chief Engineer

DRR/eui

Attachments

cc: Mr. John D. Porcari  
Mr. Michael Zezeski  
Mr. Thomas Hicks  
Mr. John M. Contestabile  
Mr. Parker F. Williams



**Maryland Department of Transportation**  
**State Highway Administration**

Parris N. Glendening  
Governor

John D. Porcari  
Secretary

Parker F. Williams  
Administrator

June 9, 1999

Mr. Russell Houston  
Government Relations Associate  
Institute of Transportation Engineers  
Suite 410  
525 School Street, SW  
Washington DC 20024-2797

**RECEIVED**

JUL 27 1999

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Dear Mr. Houston:

Subject: National 3-digit traveler information

Thank you for your recent e-mail requesting our comments on the petition to be submitted to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) by the US Department of Transportation (USDOT) for the adoption of a new, national three-digit telephone number giving drivers nationwide access to traffic and traveler information. We fully support this idea for the following reasons:

**PUBLIC NEED**

The Baltimore-Washington corridor in Maryland is one of the most congested corridors in the nation. Lack of funding, environmental and societal concerns amongst many, make roadway construction a difficult means of dealing with traffic congestion. The emphasis is to look for ways to better manage existing facilities. One such tool is providing real-time traffic information to the public, whether en-route, at home or at the place of employment. This function is one of the key components of our statewide incident management program known as Chesapeake Highway Advisories Routing Traffic or CHART. Currently, we rely on our Traveler Advisories Radios (TAR) and our Variable Message Signs (VMS) to relay traffic information to the traveling public. We also work with private media outlets to pass on information on traffic conditions to the general public. Another example of such a need by the public is the response we obtained when the CHART program went on the internet. For the first year, we have had over one million hits. Currently, we are updating the software to keep a log of all the stakeholders from the state and its surrounding jurisdictions.

410-787-5815

My direct telephone number is \_\_\_\_\_

Toll Free Telephone Number: 1-888-963-0307

Fax: X(410)787-4082, (410)553-6399, (410)582-9469, (410)787-5823, (410)787-2863, (410)787-3798  
Maryland Relay Service for Impaired Hearing or Speech: 1-800-735-2258 Statewide Toll Free

**Mailing Address: Office of Traffic & Safety • 7491 Connelley Drive • Hanover, MD 21076-1702**

## PUBLIC BENEFITS

In Maryland, the focus has been and still is to provide traffic information to the general public, regardless of economic status, place of residence or means of travel. The emphasis is to reach as many motorists as possible by whatever means available. Consideration is given to all mediums of transmission that can accomplish this objective. Clearly, a traveler information system in the form of a three-digit telephone number would be effective in reaching out and communicating traffic information to the motoring public, regardless of location or socio-economic level.

## CLEAR PUBLIC DEMAND

It has been long recognized by all agencies involved in incident management that the public clearly demands to be informed on traffic information services. Most organizations have developed ways to fulfill this requirement. In the Baltimore-Washington corridor, public agencies do not operate a 3-digit telephone number for traffic and traveler information. Most of them do maintain a regular phone line for the general public. SHA has a toll-free number. However, due to systems configuration, the agency does not keep track of the number of calls received on a daily basis. Currently, Partners in Motion which is a public/private partnership providing traffic and traveler information in the Washington DC metro area, has the only three-digit telephone number: #211, for cell phone users. They also have a regular telephone number for the general public to call in for information. They average approximately 67,000 calls per quarter, or a total below 5000 per week.

## EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE AND RELATIONSHIPS

The Baltimore-Washington corridor is one of the most congested in the nation. There are numerous initiatives and infrastructure in place to address some of the issues associated with congestion. As indicated earlier, SHA has an advanced incident management program known as CHART. The CHART program covers most of the interstate routes and most major arterials. SHA has already in place 34 closed circuit television cameras (CCTV), 35 Variable Message Signs (VMS), 29 Travelers Advisory Radios (TAR), 108 overhead speed sensors, and 47 pavement weather sensors. A statewide communication network comprised of lease lines, fiber optic cable and dedicated T-1 lines form the communication backbone of CHART operations, making it easy to exchange information with other state agencies such as Virginia Department of Transportation, and local jurisdictions such as Montgomery County which has an advanced traffic management

center. Even though there are a lot of questions to answer and issues to consider and to address regarding the regional operation of a three-digit telephone number, there is a solid infrastructure in place throughout the area to support such system.

## LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION

Control over implementation of traffic and traveler information services by state and local agencies, may or may not be an important issue. State and/or local control over implementation of traffic and traveler information services could be important because of the following considerations:

State or local jurisdictions have control over most of the required infrastructure to support such a system.

State or local jurisdictions will be concerned and will have to monitor the type of information being provided.

On the other hand, state and/or local control over implementation of traffic and traveler information services may not be an important issue because the private sector can come in at any moment and offer the service independent of the state or local jurisdictions. Private information providers may even develop and put in place their own infrastructure to gather traffic information on roadway conditions to pass on to the general public for a fee.

## PUBLIC DOLLARS AT USE

Funding for SHA's CHART program comes mostly from the federal government and from our own state's transportation trust fund.

## PUBLIC RESPONSE

Based on current practices of providing traffic and traveler information, the telephone numbers have shown to be one of the most popular means used by the general public to obtain information on roadway conditions. This trend is even more apparent when a major incident has resulted in a particular highway being shut down and during inclement weather conditions. It is expected that this practice will continue to grow, as more and more motorists become aware of the availability of such a number.

## PUBLIC EDUCATION

Any new and innovative way of providing traffic information to the general public has to be followed by a rigorous campaign of public awareness. In Maryland, public education of our CHART program is a continuous activity. We exploit every opportunity to market the program, explaining the use and benefits that can be drawn from having access to real-time traffic information. We use all possible means of reaching out to the general public such as radio, television, print media, tour of our facility, press releases, public shows, and now the internet. The telephone number and the web page are listed in all public information disseminated by the state.

## RECOGNIZE PUBLIC SERVICE

In the state of Maryland, motorists on interstate highways can use their cell phone and dial #77 to report any traffic incident. The call goes directly to the Maryland State Police. This number has been proven to be recognized as a public service available to any motorist driving with a cell phone. It has become so effective that the same number has been adopted by many states along the I-95 corridor.

## NEW AREA CODES

In Maryland, SHA uses a toll-free number that goes directly to our statewide operations center. Maryland currently has four area codes; and the southern portion of the state is included in the Washington D.C. region, which has travelers and area codes from Washington D.C. and northern Virginia. Also, it must be recognized that Maryland is a small state compared to other states such as California, Texas, Pennsylvania, New York or Florida. Although Maryland has a statewide incident management program, the major area of focus is the corridor comprising Washington D.C. and Baltimore, 2 major metropolitan regions within 30 miles of each other. However during inclement weather, there is always an increase in calls originating from other areas of the state.

## LOCAL UNFAMILIARITY

A portion of Interstate 95, the major north-south travel corridor on the east coast, goes through the state of Maryland. Indeed, there are many drivers, including truck drivers, who are unfamiliar with the region. Currently, our system does not keep records of the breakdown of the calls being received that would indicate the types of travelers requesting information.

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## TECHNOLOGY NEUTRAL

Again, at this time, we do not have any relevant data that breaks down the sources of the calls that we have received requesting traffic and traveler information. Due to current system configuration, that task cannot be performed at this moment.

## OTHER COMMENTS:

The Federal Communications Commission will be petitioned by the US Department of Transportation to adopt a new, national three-digit telephone number giving drivers access to traffic and traveler information. Will there be requirements on who will be eligible to petition. Would it be state or local agencies, or would it be any private company?

In the case of the private sector, would they be able to accept advertisements in order to be able to maintain the service? If that is the case, state or local jurisdictions would not have to compete for the 3-digit telephone number.

Once that number become available, would state or local government be able to afford the maintenance of the service if they were to operate it?

Many regional issues will have to be addressed because traffic and traveler information varies from area to area.

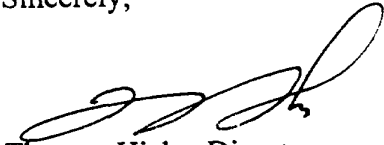
## SUMMARY

Maryland Department of Transportation is strongly in favor of assigning a three-digit, similar to 911, telephone number that gives travelers nationwide access to traffic and traveler information. There is no doubt that this new tool will enhance the dissemination of traffic information and will contribute in our efforts at mitigating congestion. Travelers in and through Maryland will greatly benefit from having one simple telephone number to remember to access valuable travel information.

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Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the request and hope that our experiences in Maryland will help US DOT in making it clear to the FCC the importance and benefits of having such a number. If you have any further questions or comments, please contact me, or Mr. Jean Yves Point-du-Jour of my staff, at 410-787-5866.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'TH', with a large, stylized flourish extending from the end.

Thomas Hicks, Director  
Office of Traffic & Safety

TH/jyp

cc: Mr. Jean Yves Point-du-Jour